

**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
to the
Bosque Wildfire Project, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, New Mexico
Environmental Assessment

Prepared
by

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

March 28, 2006

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
to the
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for the
BOSQUE WILDFIRE PROJECT, BERNALILLO AND SANDOVAL COUNTIES,
NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

In September 2004, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the Bosque Wildfire Project. The Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on September 7, 2004 (USACE, 2004). Since the completion of that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, additional funding has been received to further implement activities described in the 2004 EA. Activities described in the 2004 EA are fuel reduction, exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, debris removal, levee bank protection, access improvements, and construction of drain crossings. Since work already described in the proposed action is proposed to continue past the original time frame (ending in March 2006), this Supplemental Environmental Assessment was completed for this project.

The proposed action is to extend the period of performance of work. The 2004 EA stated that work would take place from September 2004 through March 2006. Additional funding has been appropriated to implement the project. Work, as described in the 2004 EA, is planned to continue and funded under this project, and therefore work would continue year round through April 2010 as funding allows. Time frames for work within the riparian forest would be adhered to. No new activities, except what is described in the 2004 EA, are proposed. As stated in the EA, no fuel reduction or exotic thinning would take place in live vegetation during the nesting season, May 1 through August 30, of any given year. Other work such as bridge installation may occur during these months. Additional work in the riparian forest, such as jetty jack removal, may take place during these months as long as surveys for bird nests are being completed. These activities are covered under the 2004 EA.

The No Action alternative and effects have not changed from the original EA. The following resources have been analyzed and would not be significantly affected by the proposed action: biological resources, geology, soils and hazardous, toxic and radiological waste, cultural resources, noise and land use.

On the basis of the findings of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment, no significant impact is anticipated from the proposed project on human health or the natural environment. A Finding of No Significant Impact is warranted and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this action.

3/27/06
Date

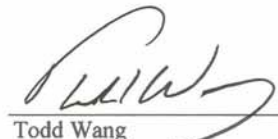

Todd Wang
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
District Engineer

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to the
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Environmental Assessment

Background

In the summer of 2003, two fires took place in the bosque in Albuquerque. The Atrisco Fire took place on June 24, 2003 near the I-40 Bridge and burned approximately 150 acres. The Montañño Fire took place on June 26, 2003 near the Montañño Road Bridge and burned approximately 113 acres. A total of approximately 263 acres of bosque were destroyed (see Figure 1).

In September 2004, the Corps completed a Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact addressing the potential effects of fuel reduction, exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, debris removal, levee bank protection, access improvements, and drain crossings. The recommended plan from the 2004 Environmental Assessment called for implementation of these items at various locations within Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties (as identified on Figures 3A-3C from the original EA, in Appendix A of this document).

Purpose and Need

Authorization for the proposed action is contained in Public Law 108-137, Operations and Maintenance, Section 116, "...the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, is authorized to undertake appropriate planning, design and construction measures for wildfire prevention and restoration in the Middle Rio Grande bosque in and around the City of Albuquerque. Work shall be directed toward those portions of the bosque which have been damaged by wildfire or are in imminent danger of damage from wildfire due to heavy fuel loads and impediments to emergency vehicle access."

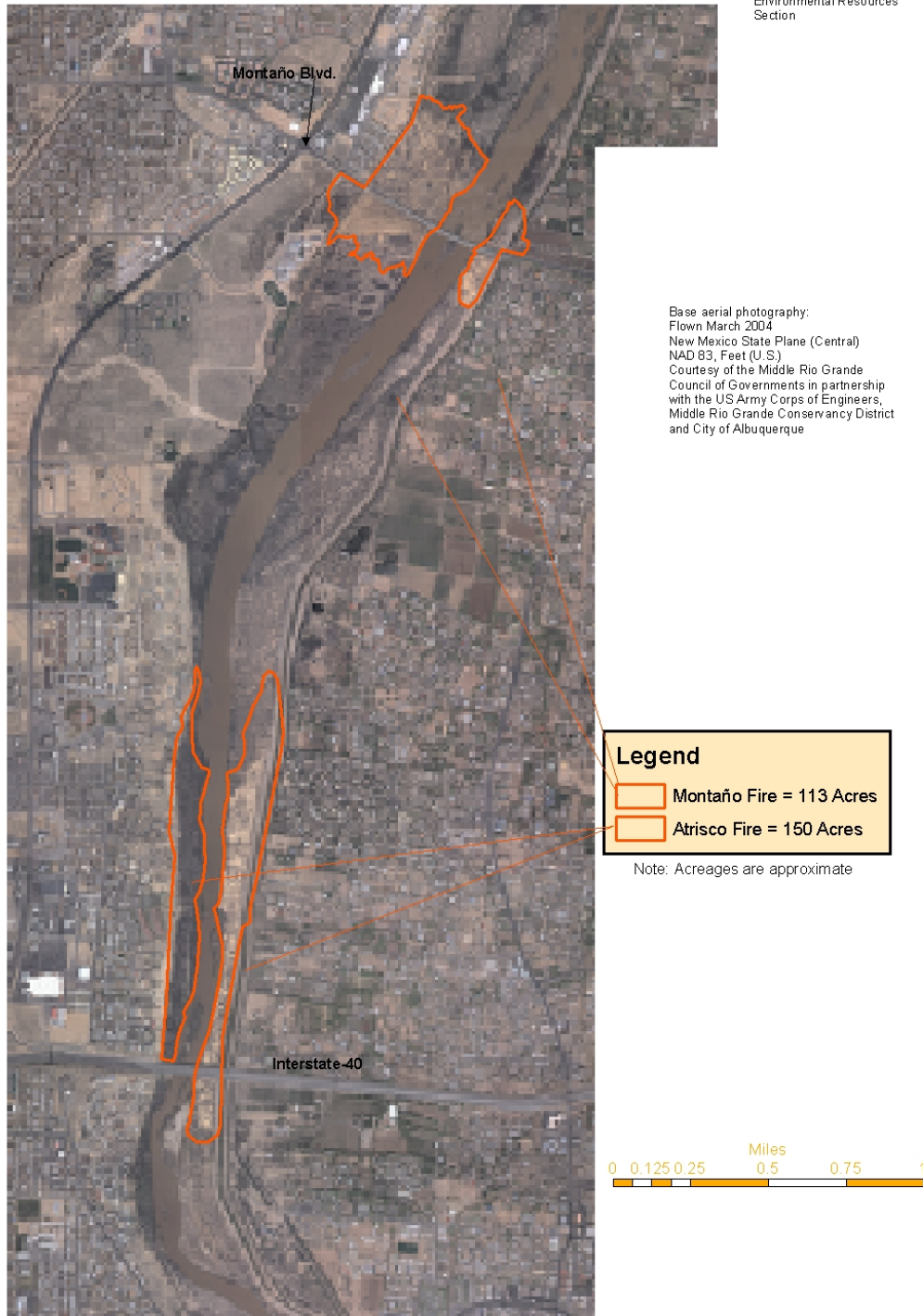
Proposed Action

This proposed action is to extend the period of performance of work of all items listed in the 2004 EA and listed above. The 2004 EA stated that work would take place from September 2004 through March 2006. Additional funding has been appropriated to implement the project. Work, as described in the 2004 EA, is planned to continue and funded under this project, and therefore work would continue year round through April 2010 as funding allows. Time frames for work within the riparian forest would be adhered to. No new activities, except what is described in the 2004 EA, are proposed. As stated in the EA, no fuel reduction or exotic thinning would take place in live vegetation during the nesting season, May 1 through August 30, of any given year. Other work such as bridge installation may occur during these months. Additional work in the riparian forest, such as jetty jack removal, may take place during these months as long as surveys for bird nests are being completed. These activities are covered under the 2004 EA.

Figure 1 - Bosque Wildfire June 2003 Fires



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Section



Foreseeable Effects and Cumulative Impacts

As discussed in the 2004 EA, the following Foreseeable effects and cumulative impacts are anticipated.

Table 1. Summary of Effects

<i>Existing Environment</i>	<i>Foreseeable Effects</i>
Physiography, Geology, Soils	Short-term adverse effect on soils
Hydrology and Hydraulics	No effect
Water Quality	No effect
Air Quality and Noise	Negligible, short-term adverse effects
Aesthetics	Short-term negative effects with long-term positive effects
Vegetation Communities	Short-term negative effects with long-term positive effects
Floodplains and Wetlands	No effect
Wildlife	Short-term negative effects with long-term positive effects
Endangered and Protected Species	May affect but not likely to adversely effect: Southwester Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Rio Grande silvery minnow, Rio Grande silvery minnow critical habitat, Yuma myotis, Occult little brown bat; No effect to: Neotropic Cormorant, Common Black-Hawk, Whooping Crane, Black Tern, Bell's Vireo, Flathead chub, Pecos River muskrat, New Mexico jumping mouse
Cultural Resources	No adverse effect to Historic Properties
Socioeconomic Considerations	No adverse effect
Land Use and Recreational Resources	Short-term negative effects with long-term positive effects
Indian Trust Assets	No adverse effect
Environmental Justice	No adverse effect

A further description of the Foreseeable Effects is in the 2004 EA. There are no changes to these Foreseeable Effects by this Supplemental EA.

As discussed in the 2004 EA, there are a number of other efforts to reduce fuels and non-native vegetation in this reach of the bosque. In summary, it is proposed that this project would have a positive impact on the environment resulting from the potential cumulative effects of other Federal and non-Federal agencies.

Comments that were made in response to the public review of the 2004 EA included questions regarding Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction, use of herbicides, recreation, endangered species, effects from installation of drain crossings, fire fighting in the Corrales Bosque Preserve, and wildlife. All comments were addressed in the 2004 EA and details are available in Appendix E of the 2004 EA.

No Action

The No Action alternative has not changed from the original EA. If fuel reduction, exotic thinning, jetty jack removal, debris removal, levee bank protection, access improvements, and construction of drain crossings did not occur, the fire hazard level would remain the same, if not increase, and the potential to fight imminent fires would not be improved.

Preparers

Ondrea Hummel, Biologist - Environmental Resources Section

Julie Hall, Ecologist - Environmental Resources Section (Quality Control)

References

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District. 2004. Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Bosque Wildfire Project, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, New Mexico. September 2004. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Consultation and Coordination

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Ms. Susan McMullin)

USEPA, Region 6 (Mr. Rob Lawrence)

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Mr. Ken Maxey)

Hopi Tribal Council (Mr. Wayne Taylor, Jr.)

Cultural Preservation Office (Mr. Leigh Kuwanwisiwma)

Navajo Nation (Mr. Joe Shirley, Jr.)

Navajo Nation Historic Preservation (Mr. Alan S. Downer, Ph.D)

White Mountain Apache Tribe (Honorable Dallas Massey, Sr.)

Historic Preservation-White Mountain Apache Tribe (Mr. John Welsh)

Pueblo of Isleta (Honorable Alvino Lucero)

Pueblo of Sandia (Honorable Stuart Paisano)

Language & Cultural Resources-Pueblo of Sandia (Mr. Sam Montoya)

Pueblo of Laguna (Honorable Roland Johnson)

NAGPRA Chairman-Pueblo of Laguna (Mr. Victor Sarracino)

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Honorable Albert Alvidrez)

Environmental Management-Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Mr. Jacob Massoud)

New Mexico Forestry and Resources

Conservation Division (Mr. Robert Sivinski)

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Mr. Mike Sloane)

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Mr. Luis Rios)

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (Mr. Estevan Lopez)

New Mexico Environmental Department (Ms. Marcy Leavitt)

Bernalillo County Public Works (Mr. Tim West)

Bernalillo County Public Works (Mr. Martin Garcia)
City of Albuquerque Open Space (Dr. Matt Schmader)
City of Albuquerque Environmental Health (Mr. Alfredo Santistevan)
Albuquerque Fire Department (Mr. Robert Halton)
City of Albuquerque Public Works (Mr. Dan Hogan)
Village of Corrales (Ms. Claudia Smith)
Rio Grande Nature Center (Ms. Rebecca Tydings)
Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (Mr. Subhas Shah)
AMAFCA (Mr. John Kelly)
Ms. Amy Jaeger

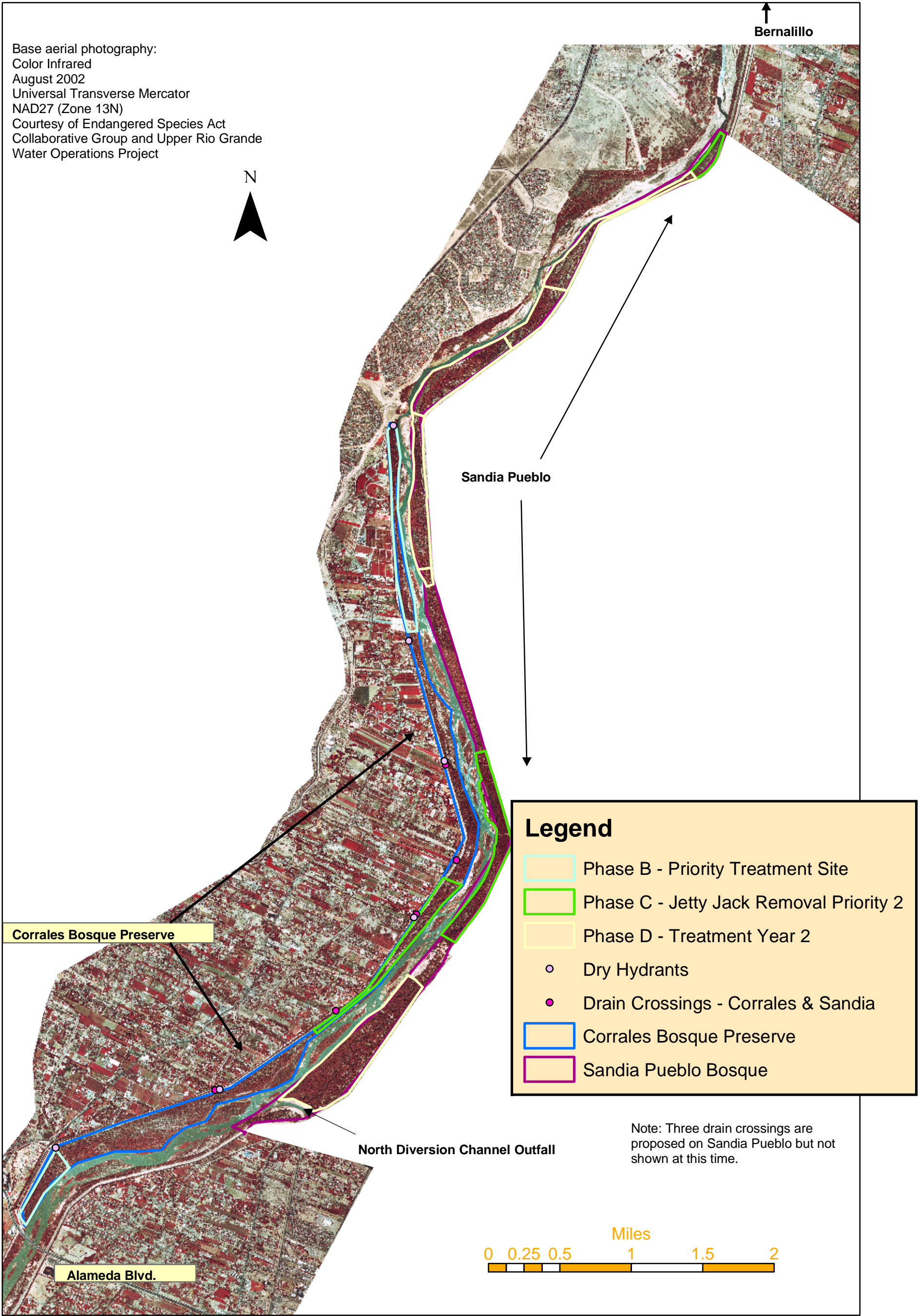
APPENDIX A.
Figures 3A-3C



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September 2, 2004

Figure 3A - Bosque Wildfire Corrales Bosque Preserve and Sandia Pueblo





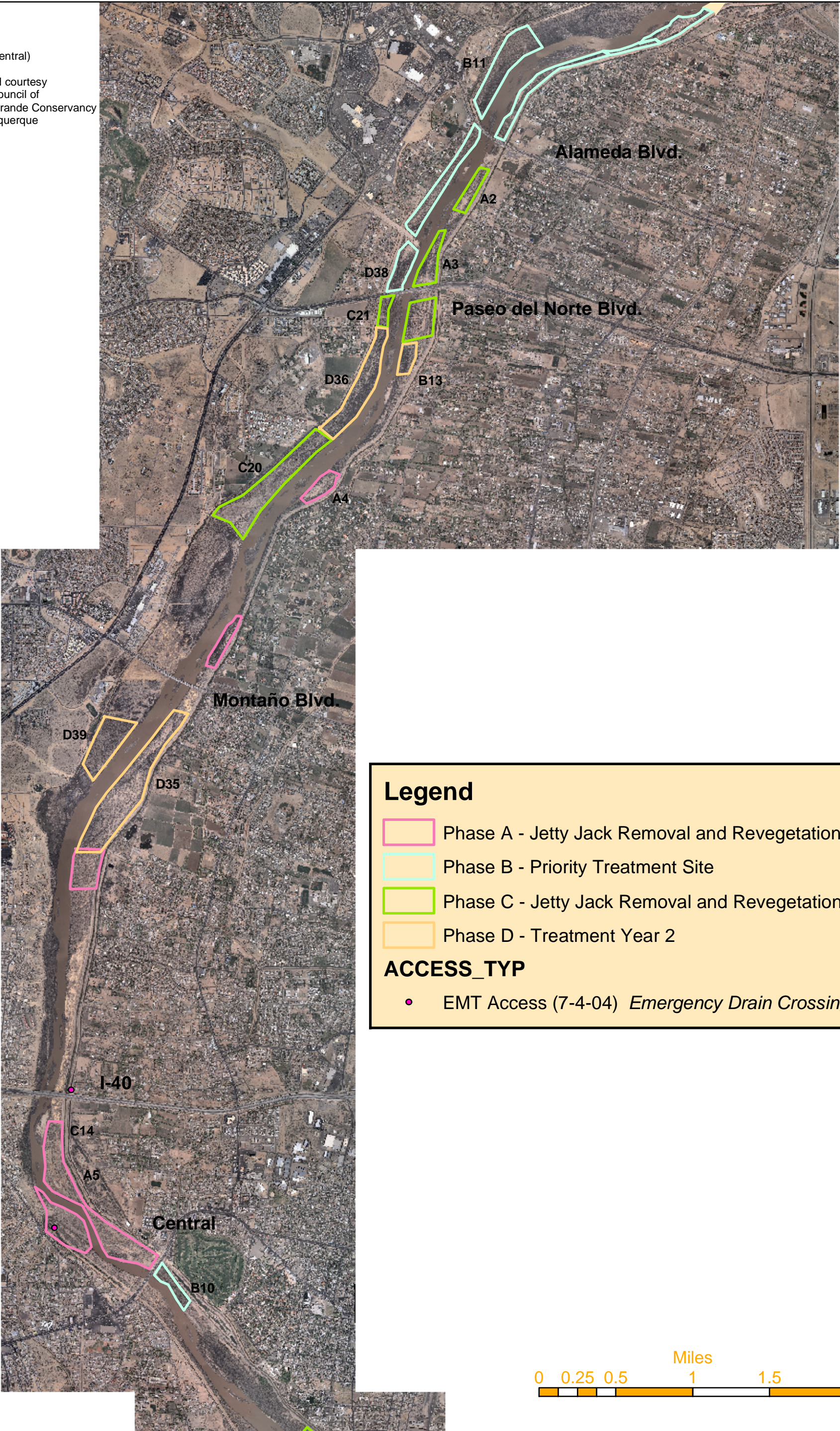
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Environmental Resources Section

Figure 3B - Bosque Wildfire Albuquerque Reach

September 2, 2004

Base aerial photography:
Flown March 2004
New Mexico State Plane (Central)
NAD 83, Feet (U.S.)
Aerial photography provided courtesy
of the Middle Rio Grande Council of
Governments, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy
District and the City of Albuquerque



Legend

- Phase A - Jetty Jack Removal and Revegetation
- Phase B - Priority Treatment Site
- Phase C - Jetty Jack Removal and Revegetation
- Phase D - Treatment Year 2

ACCESS_TYP

- EMT Access (7-4-04) *Emergency Drain Crossing*



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Figure 3C - Bosque Wildfire Albuquerque Reach

September 2, 2004

Base aerial photography:
Flown March 2004
New Mexico State Plane (Central)
NAD 83, Feet (U.S.)
Aerial photography provided courtesy
of the Middle Rio Grande Council of
Governments, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy
District and the City of Albuquerque



Rio Bravo

Bridge Blvd.

A6

A7

B9

D34

D33

D32

B12

D30

I-25

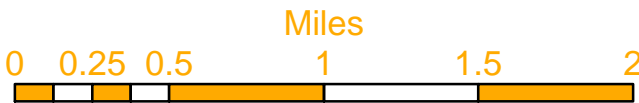
D31

Legend

- Burn Restoration
- Phase A - Jetty Jack Removal and Revegetation
- Phase B - Priority Treatment Site
- Phase C - Jetty Jack Removal and Revegetation
- Phase D - Treatment Year 2

ACCESS_TYP

- EMT Access (7-4-04) *Emergency Drain Crossing*



APPENDIX B

Agency and Public Comments

An 8-day public review process was held for this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) March 13-21, 2006. The mailing list and e-mail list for the 2004 EA was used and an ad was placed in the Albuquerque Journal regarding notification that the Draft SEA was available for review. The following comments were received.

March 10, 2006

Planning, Projects and Program Management Division
Planning Branch
Environmental Resources Section

\\\\\\
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Dear \\\\:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District, has completed a **Draft Finding of No Significant Impact and Supplemental Environmental Assessment (DSEA) for the Bosque Wildfire Project, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, New Mexico.** This proposed action is to extend the period of performance of work which includes selectively thinning vegetation from areas with high fuel loads and/or non-native plant species populations; removing jetty jacks where possible; removing debris piles; improving emergency access in the form of drain crossings, levee road improvement, and construction of turn-arounds; and revegetating burned and thinned areas in the Albuquerque Reach of the bosque, the Corrales Bosque Preserve, and locations on the Pueblo of Sandia. The original EA stated that work would take place from September 2004 through March 2006. Additional work is planned and funded under this project, and therefore work would continue year round through April 2010 as funding allows.

The DEA is electronically available for viewing and copying at the Albuquerque District website (under "FONSI/Environmental Assessments") at:
<http://www.spa.usace.army.mil> . Hard copies may also be obtained upon request.

Please provide comments by March 21, 2006. Please forward your comments to Ms. Ondrea Hummel, Biologist, Environmental Resources Section, at the above address, phone (505) 342-3375, fax (505)342-3668, or email to Ondrea.C.Hummel@usace.army.mil.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Hall
Chief, Environmental Resources Section

**White Mountain Apache Tribe Historic Preservation Office
PO Box 507, Fort Apache, AZ 85941
1(928) 338-3033 / fax: 338-6055**

To: Ms. Ondrea Hummel, USACE Biologist
Date: March 16, 2006
Proposed project: (DSEA) for the Bosque Wildfire Project.

.....

The White Mountain Apache Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) appreciates receiving information on the proposed project, dated March 10, 2006. In regards to this, please attend to the checked items below.

► ***There is no need to send additional information – unless project planning or implementation results in the discovery of sites or items having known or suspected Apache cultural affiliations.***

☐ The proposed Project is located within an area of probable cultural or historical importance to the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT). As part of the effort to identify historical properties that maybe affected by the project we recommend an entnohistorical study and interviews with Apache elders. Ramon Riley, the Cultural Resource Director is the contact person at (928) 338-4625.

☐ The proposed project is located within or adjacent to a known historic property of cultural or historical importance to the WMAT and will most likely result in adverse affects to said property. Please refrain from further steps in project planning or implementation.

NOTES: With the understanding the proposed project has been in progress since September 2004 and is proposed to continue into 2010 with a determination of a “No Significant Impact” we have determined that the project poses no threat to the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s (WMAT) traditional cultural properties and/or important religious places and the project may progress as planned.

We look forward to continued collaboration in the preservation of places of cultural and historical significance.

Sincerely,

Mark T. Altaha
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
White Mountain Apache Tribe



Office of:

The Governor
The Secretary
The Treasurer

PUEBLO OF LAGUNA

P.O. BOX 194
LAGUNA, NEW MEXICO 87026



(505) 552-6596
(505) 552-6664
(505) 552-6655

March 15, 2006,

Ondrea Hummel
Department of the Army
Albuquerque District, Corps of Engineers
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109-3435

Dear Ms. Hummel:

RE: Bosque Wildfire Project

The Pueblo of Laguna appreciates your consideration of possible interest your project may have on traditional religious or cultural properties.

At this time Laguna Pueblo has determined that the proposed undertakings WILL NOT have an affect at this time, but in the event that any new archaeological sites are discovered and any items are recovered, we would like to be notified to review items.

Sincerely,

Roland E. Johnson, Governor
Pueblo of Laguna



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113
Phone: (505) 346-2525 Fax: (505) 346-2542

March 15, 2006

Cons. #2-22-04-I-480b

Julie Hall, Chief, Environmental Resources
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Dear Ms. Hall:

This responds to your March 10, 2006, letter seeking review of the draft supplemental environmental assessment (EA) and concurrence on your Bosque Wildfire Project, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, New Mexico (Bosque Wildfire Project) (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) 2006). Your proposed action is to extend the period of work from April 2006 through April 2010. You are proposing to continue: 1) selectively thinning areas with high fuel loads and/or non-native plant species populations; 2) removing jetty jacks and debris piles; 3) improving emergency access and levee roads; 4) constructing turn-arounds; and 5) revegetating burned and thinned areas in the Albuquerque Reach of the Rio Grande bosque, the Corrales Bosque Preserve, and locations within the Pueblos of Sandia and Isleta.

We previously concurred that your proposed action "may affect, is not likely to adversely affect" the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*) and its designated critical habitat. The extension of your period of work until April 2010 does not change any of our previous conclusions.

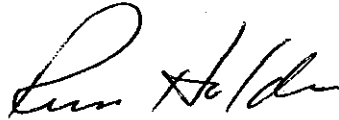
We encourage efforts such as this project to reduce the risk of wildfire in the wildland urban interface, while conducting restoration activities. Protecting human life and property is the highest priority. In addition, threats of wide-scale habitat loss due to fire are real and immediate on many private and public lands. We appreciate your continued efforts to coordinate activities associated with the Bosque Wildfire Project with our office.

This concludes section 7 consultation with the Service for the Bosque Wildfire Project. If monitoring or other information results in additional modification of the project, consultation with the Service should be reinitiated. Please contact the Service to verify that the above determinations and concurrence are still valid if: 1) future surveys find proposed, threatened or endangered species in areas where they have not been previously observed; 2) the

proposed project is changed or new information reveals effects of the actions to the listed species or their habitat to an extent not considered in these evaluations; or 3) a new species is listed that may be affected by the proposed activities.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance. If you have any questions, please contact Eric Hein at the letterhead address or at (505) 761-4735.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Holder".

Russ Holder
Acting Field Supervisor

cc:

Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Director, New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, Forestry
Division, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Superintendent, City of Albuquerque Open Space Division, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Chief Engineer, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Manager, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Literature Cited

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. March 2006. Draft Supplemental Environmental
Assessment for the Bosque Wildfire Project, Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties, New
Mexico. Albuquerque District.